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Greece

Biotechnology

Greece Continues to Ban GM Corn for Planting 2007

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Report Highlights:

The Government of Greece (GOG) does not allow GMO seed to be sold or planted. Conventional corn seed can be imported as long as the adventitious presence of transgenic material does not exceed 0.5% (for cotton seed this level is "zero").

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Rome [IT2]
[GR]

Just last week, Deputy Minister of Agriculture Mr. A. Kontos signed a new revision of a January 2006 ministerial decree that prohibits commercialization and usage of GMO hybrid corn seed varieties of the MON 810 series in Greece. This revision raised the number of banned varieties from 31 to 47. The continuing GOG justification for the ban is that these hybrids pose a risk to the environment and to domestic conventional varieties. The research to support these contentions is unknown. Greece has yet to implement any coexistence legislation.

In a separate, but GMO related action last week, the same Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Mr A. Kontos, ordered the confiscation of 88 tons of Chinese rice protein meal at the Greek Customs Port of Pireaus for containing an unapproved GM event (Bt 63). The product was to be used as animal feed. The total tonnage originated with three 3 different shipments of 48, 20 and 20 tons of bagged product. Ministry of Agriculture border authorities will have the product destroyed or re-exported. Reportedly, the EU Alert System has been informed of these GOG actions. The GMO tests were conducted in Germany. Another 90 tons of similar Chinese origin product is being held in Pireaus customs awaiting laboratory test results.

The discovery of the Chinese GM rice has led to the promulgation of a public order to Greek Customs and local agricultural authorities, requiring that all shipments of imported rice be subjected to laboratory testing before clearing through customs, and that entry controls are not to rely only on accompanying documents and certificates.

Mr. Kontos declared to the media that, "We keep our positions fixed against the commercialization and cultivation of GMOs and we are intensifying the implementation of our preventive measures"....

Comment: Ironically, it seems that Greece is more than willing to tie up valuable border and lab resources chasing GMOs rather than have them available to deal with well documented human and animal health risks.